



PC – 10

An assessment of eLearning readiness of undergraduates at University of Ruhuna

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Technologies and resources used for educational purposes change from time to time. Within the university education these technologies have become a prominent feature. eLearning is fast becoming a major learning and knowledge delivery method within universities as a tool and its programmes are essential for university undergraduates as educational sources. It has a great impact on the educational services of university students. Therefore, it is important to investigate the eLearning Readiness of the undergraduates at University of Ruhuna which is one of the main universities in Sri Lanka. Assessment of eLearning readiness is an important part of distance education of University of Ruhuna. The objectives of the study were to identify factors influencing the undergraduates' readiness and the research questions of the study have been formulated to obtain the level of their readiness for eLearning. Ninety students were randomly selected as the sample. They were from Faculties of Science, Management and Finance and Humanities and Social sciences (30 students from each faculty). Survey was the basic method of data collection. Further, interviews and questionnaires were used to collect the data. Minitab 14 was used to analyze the data. Undergraduates from Faculty of Science had used eLearning programs more than students from other two faculties. Most of the undergraduates of Faculty of Humanities and Social sciences were not aware of even the word "eLearning". Fifty percent of them had no knowledge to use Learning Management System. Readiness of eLearning could be classified through several features, such as, psychological readiness, sociological readiness, environmental readiness, human resource readiness, technological skill (aptitude) readiness and equipment readiness. The salient feature to be noticed was the lack of psychological readiness. Changing attitudes of undergraduates towards technology is essential to increase the readiness of eLearning. According to the survey, Lecturers have a greater responsibility to motivate undergraduates for eLearning.

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